



Renton Police Department

Business Watch News

September 2008

Preventing Commercial Burglary



Burglary is often a crime of opportunity. A burglar will select his target because it offers him the most likelihood of carrying out his crime undetected and with the fewest number of obstacles in his way. Think of it this way: you're on your way to work, running late, and need to drop off your child at daycare. But you **NEED** coffee! Are you more likely to stop somewhere where you have to park, get Junior out of the car seat, lock the doors, stand in line while balancing your wallet and the baby, get your coffee, get Junior back in his car seat and get back on the road, or are you probably going to find a drive-through and skip the obstacles? Like you, the burglar is looking for the simplest way to reach his objective.

With this in mind, consider your business from a burglar's perspective. "Case" your business the way a criminal would and look for easy methods of gaining entry and rapid ways to remove property.

Protect the Perimeter

Make sure all doors are protected with deadbolt locks, and consider installing latch guards over the locks to prevent prying. Deadbolt locks should have a bolt that extends at least 1.5 inches into the door frame.



All exterior and security doors should be of metal or solid wood construction. Exposed hinges should be pinned to prevent removal. For employee safety, all solid doors should have peepholes installed, so the exterior can be viewed for suspicious activity prior to opening the door.

Padlocks should be made of steel and kept locked when not in immediate use. Remember to remove serial numbers from your locks to prevent unauthorized keys from being made.

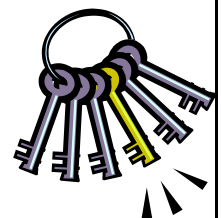


Windows should have secure locks, primary and secondary locking devices, and shatter-resistant glass. Replacing particularly vulnerable windows with plexi-glass or glass that is reinforced with metal screening is a good option. An alternative to new windows is Security Film, which can be installed on windows to make them more resistant to breaking.

Check all doors and windows at the end of the business day to ensure they are closed and locked. Public areas such as restrooms should also be checked, to ensure that a criminal is not concealed there with the intent of waiting until the building is empty to commit his crimes.

Lock skylights, ceiling vents, and roof access doors from the inside. Remove any items that could provide the means for a criminal to access your rooftop (ladders, nearby trees, etc.)

Maintain good key-control procedures for all employees, and change the locks when an employee leaves. A less expensive option may be to have the existing locks re-tumbled.



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Crimes Occurring on Business Property For the Month of August 2008

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY:

LOSS

900 block Harrington Ave
NE
2:27 p.m.

An employee looked up from stocking shelves to find the suspect, wearing a black ski mask, pointing a gun at her. The suspect walked the employee back to the business office where a bank deposit was being prepared, demanded money, and told the employees to get on the floor before fleeing. A K9 track was unsuccessful. A possible suspect is a regular customer who constantly asks the price of various items but purchases the same item every time. The business owner believes this person comes in to observe how the business operates. *Crime Prevention Tip: Suspicious activity frequently precedes crime. The suspect in this case may have been "casing" the business during prior repeated visits and appears to have known when a robbery would likely net the most cash. Bank deposits should be prepared, and deposits should be made at different times of the day, so someone "casing" the business would have more difficulty predicting the best time to commit a robbery. If your business handles a lot of cash, consider hiring an armored transport service.*

unknown

17000 block 116th Ave SE
11:45 a.m.

The suspect entered the business and pointed a handgun at the owner, demanding that she open the cash register. Latent fingerprints were lifted from the scene. *Crime Prevention Tip: Keep the minimum amount of cash necessary to conduct business in the cash register. Post signs indicating that minimal cash is accessible to employees. A first time "good haul" will encourage a robber to return for a repeat performance.*

\$351

2800 block NE Sunset Blvd
9:35 a.m.

Officers responded to a report of a robbery. The suspect first came into the business and asked the price of an item, then left without buying or touching anything. The business owner observed the suspect driving around the parking lot before parking and watching the owner. About thirty minutes later the suspect returned and put on a ski mask. The suspect told the employee to open the cash drawer, and when the employee hesitated, pulled out a ten inch handgun and racked the slide. The employee gave the suspect the money from the cash register and from his pockets. The suspect fled without touching anything. *Crime Prevention Tip: Suspicious activity frequently precedes crime, and someone sitting in the parking lot "watching" the business is certainly suspicious. Call 9-1-1 to report suspicious activity.*

\$699

1200 block SW 43rd St
3:00 a.m.

The suspect asked to use the restroom at the business. The suspect exited the bathroom wearing a handkerchief over his face and holding a gun, and told the employee to open the register. The employee backed away and did not open the register; no money was taken. *Crime Prevention Tip: No amount of money or property is worth losing your life.*

\$0

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY:

LOSS

200 block SW 7th St

Officers responded to a burglary in progress and observed the suspect running from the business carrying bottles of liquor. A security officer from a nearby business had seen the suspect loitering in the area, heard glass breaking, and called 9-1-1. The suspect was apprehended and was in possession of a flashlight, wire cutters, and several bottles of liquor. A search incident to arrest revealed a block of cream cheese that was still cold to the touch in the suspect's sweatshirt pocket. The business owner responded and identified the stolen property as having been removed from his business. The suspect was booked for felony investigation of Burglary. *Crime Prevention Tip: Applying Security Film to window and door glass can increase the strength of the glass by up to three-hundred percent, greatly increasing the amount of time and effort a criminal must take to gain illegal entry to your business.*

\$60

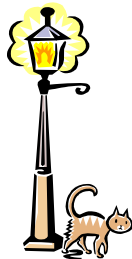
Preventing Commercial Burglary (continued)

Look at the Landscape



Trim back trees and shrubs near windows to eliminate areas of concealment for would-be thieves. Plant thorny bushes under windows where a burglar might attempt to gain entry.

Keep windows cleared of signs, merchandise and advertisements that can obstruct the view of a passer-by or a police officer. Crimes that cannot be seen cannot be reported.



Install exterior lighting to increase visibility in parking lots and around windows, doors, outdoor walkways, etc.

Should my business have an alarm?



The focus of burglary *prevention* is to make your business a less likely target in the first place. To accomplish this, your business needs to be properly secured, well lit during

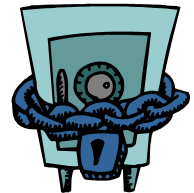
hours of darkness, with valuables such as cash and merchandise protected. An alarm may provide additional security, as well as peace of mind. Before investing in an alarm system, check with several companies and decide what level of security fits your needs. Learn how to use your system properly and test it regularly. Contact the Washington State Burglar and Fire Alarm Association at 800-248-9272 for additional information. Alarms in Renton need to be registered with the police department; the form can be downloaded from the City website at www.rentonwa.gov. If your business is outside of Renton, check with your local police department to see if you need to register your alarm.



More Suggestions

Make bank deposits on a daily basis to minimize cash on hand. Vary the times and transportation methods so someone "casing" the business will not be able to determine a pattern.

Be sure your safe is fireproof and securely anchored. Leave it open when it's empty, and use it to lock up cash, business checks, keys, company credit cards and other valuable merchandise when the business is closed. If the safe is not empty, it should be kept locked at all times.



Use heavy cables to lock down computers, machinery, and other expensive equipment. If it takes a long time to remove the item, the criminal may get frustrated and leave without it.

Keep a current inventory of your business machinery including computers, office equipment, tools, etc. Providing the police with a list that contains the brand, model, serial number and description of each item will assist in recovering your property.

Leave cash registers empty and open after hours to show a burglar who is "shopping" for a target that there is no cash readily accessible.



Valuable and easily transportable items, such as laptop computers, phone cards, cigarettes and similar items, should be placed away from windows. Valuables near windows are often targeted in "smash and grab" burglaries, where the suspect never makes entry to the business but simply breaks the glass, reaches in, and removes the item.

RENTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Terri Vickers / Crime Prevention Unit
1055 S Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057
Phone: (425) 430-7520
Fax: (425) 430-7505
E-mail the Editor at: tvickers@ci.renton.wa.us

Crimes Occurring on Business Property in August (continued)

100 block Airport Wy	Employees arrived to find the business ransacked. Entry was gained by pushing a dumpster against an exterior wall to access a window that had been previously broken and was "secured" with a cardboard box. Once inside, suspect/s pried a cash register, smashed video games, and stole cash, cigarettes, and three security cameras. Latent fingerprints were lifted from the scene and video surveillance of the suspect was retrieved from the recorder. <i>Crime Prevention Tip: Check your business frequently for possible points of entry, such as broken windows in isolated places, roof vents, etc.</i>	unknown
200 block SW Sunset Blvd	Suspect/s removed several items of clothing from the business. Entry was gained by breaking a glass door, which had been pried until the glass shattered. Video surveillance from the business shows a suspect who appears to be the same person who burglarized the store three months prior. <i>Crime Prevention Tip: An application of Security Film would increase the strength of the glass, increasing the amount of time and effort needed to shatter it.</i>	\$200
1100 block Hoquiam Ave NE	Officers responded to an alarm and found three subjects fleeing on foot. Entry to the business had been gained by prying open a window. The suspects removed a video projector (which was later recovered) and a motion detector from the building. All three suspects were arrested for investigation of burglary in the second degree. <i>Crime Prevention Tip: Video projectors are often stolen from business offices and schools. Highly "steal-able" items such as these should be secured with cable locks to increase the difficulty in removing them from the premises.</i>	\$1,500 (recovered)

Auto Thefts: There were 69 cars reported stolen in Renton during the month of August 2008.

Auto Recoveries: Nineteen vehicles that were stolen outside the City were recovered in Renton during August 2008.